

ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

infinite fruit. In this conflict you cannot but gain,
whether you
live or die. If you die, you gain life eternal, and are
set in a
place safe and not subject to change; and if you
survive, you
have made a sacrifice of yourselves voluntarily to
God, and you
will be able to keep what you possess with a good
conscience."

That last clause, alas, makes us realize that these
new knights of
Christ were, after all, mere soldiers of fortune ; but
Catherine
goes on to exhort them always to keep the blood of
the Lamb
before their eyes, to fight for the truth that " the
members of the
devil" are denying, and enter upon the conflict with
the highest
attention alone, purifying their consciences by holy
confession.

Let the captain-general himself set the example.
The holy soil
of Rome, upon which they are fighting, should
animate them to
fight manfully. " Keep in the field with the standard
of the most
holy Cross ; think that the blood of these glorious
martyrs is
ever crying out in the sight of God, invoking His aid
upon you.

Think that this city is the garden of the blessed
Christ and the
very beginning of our faith, and, therefore, every
one of his own
accord should be filled with valour here. Be
grateful, you and
the others, be grateful for the benefit you have
received, to God
and to that glorious knight St. George, whose name
you keep ;
may he defend you and be your guard, even unto
death. Forgive
me, if I have wearied you too much with words.
Love of
Holy Church and your salvation must
excuse me, and my

conscience which has been constrained by the sweet
will of God.

We will do like Moses ; for the people fought,
and Moses
prayed; and whilst he prayed, the people conquered.

So shall
we do, if only our prayer be pleasing and acceptable
to God."¹

On this same day, May 6, Catherine wrote to the
King of
France and to the Queen of Naples, evidently
thinking that the
latter would have been moved by the victory of the
Urbanists so
near her own territories. She beseeches
Giovanna to have pity
upon her own soul, and again expresses her longing
to come to

¹ Letter 347 (219). The authenticity of this letter has been
occasionally
called in question, but no student of the manuscripts can
entertain ^the slightest
doubt on the subject. **" /